



## How to contact me

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1-800-635-9993

## Representative Eileen Cody

*34th Legislative District*

## 2003 Session Report

Dear Neighbor:

This is my first legislative newsletter to the 34<sup>th</sup> Legislative District.

Because of redistricting last year, the part of West Seattle where I live was moved from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 34<sup>th</sup> Legislative District.

It is a pleasure to join State Senator Erik Poulsen and my fellow State Representative Joe McDermott in representing your interests in Olympia. I am still learning about the specific needs and concerns of the new 34<sup>th</sup> district, so please keep sending those emails. Better yet, if you have a chance, come down to Olympia for a visit.

I've served in the legislature for the past nine years, and am a registered nurse specializing in rehabilitation. I've been on staff at Group Health Cooperative in Seattle since 1978. For the past 5 years I've put my knowledge and passion about health care issues to work as the Chair of the House Health Care Committee. One of my top priorities during this time has been reducing the cost of prescription drugs, and I'm proud to say that my bill to make prescription drugs more affordable (HB 1214) has already passed the House. I'm hoping the Senate will pass the bill soon.

In this newsletter, I've included information on the state budget, health care, and the proposed cuts to the ferry system. If you would like additional information on these or any other issues, please feel free to call Jasmin Weaver, my Legislative Assistant, or me at (360) 786-7978.

We'd love to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Eileen Cody, R.N.



# Rep. Eileen Cody • 2003 Session Report

## Prescription Drug Reform

Once again, I am fighting hard to make prescription drugs more affordable. I've been working on this for the past four years and I think with the support of the Governor, and Democrats and Republicans in both the House and the Senate, chances are better than ever that this will be the year we get it done. In fact, the House of Representatives has already passed our version of the bill – SHB 1214 – now we're just waiting on the Senate.

Last year, the pharmaceutical industry and some biotech companies had concerns that we were setting price controls. I can assure you that we're not doing anything of the sort. My prescription drug plan has always been about improving the quality of care, and making prescription drugs more affordable and accessible. I believe we can get the right drug to the right person at the right time while still keeping an eye on the bottom line. Our goal is to spend our revenues (your tax dollars) as efficiently as possible.

This bill is supported by the AARP, Washington Citizen Action, the Washington State Labor Council, the Washington State Medical Association, and many others.

I am hopeful that this will be the year we make prescription drugs more affordable and increase the quality of care for all Washingtonians.



## Other Health Care Priorities

### *Solving the Nursing shortage*

There is a severe shortage of health care workers in Washington, especially in nursing.

We need to offer more training in the health care field for high school graduates, dislocated workers, unemployed people and others in order to fill this gap.

### *Addressing Disparities*

Important differences persist in the quality of health care provided for people of different races, ethnicities and genders. Rates of cancer, heart disease, osteoporosis and other illnesses vary widely by racial and ethnic group. We need to start identifying the causes of these disparities and developing strategies to eliminate them.

### *Improving Nutrition in Schools*

Obesity is reaching epidemic proportions among school-age children. The amount of junk food and soda that our kids get at school is staggering. We should encourage school districts to provide healthy alternatives (juice, fresh fruit, vegetables, etc.) and educate our children about obesity, nutrition, exercise and healthy eating.

### *What does the Prescription Drug Bill (SHB 1214) do?*

1. Adopts a preferred drug list based on the best medical evidence available.
2. Allows for bulk buying, letting the state get volume discounts. And everyone who wants to can join in on the savings. Kind of like Costco.
3. Allows physicians to prescribe the drug they believe is best for their patients by writing "dispense as written"
4. Educates consumers and providers about the list, how it was developed, and how it works.

## Passenger Only Ferries

The proposed cuts to Vashon Island ferry service, and passenger only ferries in particular, would have a devastating impact on the residents of Vashon Island. I know how uniquely important ferry service is to life on Vashon Island, and I am working hard to ensure that other legislators and



officials at the Washington State Ferries understand our position.

The proposed Washington State Ferries plan is unacceptable. It would disproportionately harm the residents of Vashon Island by drastically increasing their commute time and severely limiting their travel options into Seattle. It is also unfair to the residents of West Seattle, as it will put hundreds of additional cars on the roads in our neighborhood.

I have had several meetings with Washington State Ferries Director Mike Thorne to express my concerns about

the proposed cuts to ferry service and the short notice we were given about these cuts.

If we don't get funding for at least another year of passenger only service, we will follow Kitsap County's example and explore the possibility of creating a partnership with King County or look into involving private businesses as ferry service providers.

My goal, however, is to find a solution here in Olympia.

# Rep. Eileen Cody • 2003 Session Report

## Balancing the Budget

One of my main concerns is making sure that we have strong programs that promote the health and welfare of everyone in our communities. Despite the challenge of a \$2.4 billion budget deficit, I will do everything I can to ensure that these programs are funded to the fullest extent possible.

Where did this huge budget deficit come from? Our current recession and several recent tax cutting initiatives are the primary causes. Now we are being forced to make difficult decisions between many vitally important programs. It's not just funding for

human services and education that is threatened. Environmental programs, battered women's shelters, and children's services are also facing possible cuts. Every area of state government will have to take some cuts.

In the long run, I think we should restructure the tax system in Washington State to ensure that vital services are protected. Even if we establish a more fair and equitable tax system, it will be impossible to implement it in time to address this year's budget crisis. That's why the legislature is going to have some difficult choices to make this year.

My hope is that we will not rely too heavily on making cuts or raising taxes, but will solve this year's budget crisis by striking the right balance between tax increases and budget cuts.

### *Some of the proposed cuts:*

- **Higher Education:** \$109 million
- **Social Service Programs:** \$215 million
- **Basic Health Program:** 60,000 slots eliminated
- **Optional Medicaid Services:** \$149.5 million

***"I am going to do everything I can to make sure that programs important to the people of the 34th District are funded to the fullest extent possible... In the long run we need to face the fact that we will need to restructure our highly regressive tax system"***



During the legislative session I will be sending out occasional updates — called E-memos — via email. If you would like to be added to the distribution list, please send me an email ([cody\\_ei@leg.wa.gov](mailto:cody_ei@leg.wa.gov)) with the word "E-memo" in the subject line. Please feel free to include a note about what issues you would like me to include in these updates.

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**Rep. Eileen Cody**

PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

**Comments:**

Please use this space to send me a few comments about any issues or concerns you might have:

Dear Rep. Cody \_\_\_\_\_

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